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C O N F I D E N T I A L TALLINN 000347

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [AF](#) [EN](#)

SUBJECT: ESTONIAN REACTION TO AFGHANISTAN CIV-MIL CELL
CONCEPT

Classified By: DCM Karen Decker for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

REF: STATE 99182

STATE 97991

¶1. (C) Post has engaged the Government of Estonia (GOE) Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Defense (MOD) on multiple occasions with regards to reftel. Neither agency was able to provide a substantive response with regards to requests for contributions to the Civ-Mil cell. However, on October 1, the MOD informed Poloff that they (MOD) support the initiative in principle, but in all likelihood will not be able to send representatives. As such, the MOD is more likely to support the second option outlined in the non-paper related to reftel which envisions COM-RC South hosting regular meetings of PRT/Task Force senior civilians, Task Force commanders and headquarters staff already in theater to facilitate cross-provincial and cross-sectoral coordination. However, MOD interlocutors were clear that this is not the official GOE position on the matter, but the current thinking within the MOD. The GOE will only express their final position at an official meeting in which the Cell is formally discussed.

¶2. (C) DCM has conducted an active outreach campaign to and among Estonian government departments involved in Afghanistan on this issue. The MFA leadership supports civ-mil coordination, though they cannot fund new positions as the MFA's budget was significantly reduced this fall, and they are now faced with the necessity of eliminating MFA positions. The likelihood of Estonia's participation in the cell ultimately rests on whether Estonia decides to stop doing something else. For example, in a recent conversation with Andres Kolk, an Estonian diplomat currently assigned to the EUPOL mission in Kabul, he told DCM and Poloff that Estonia currently fields at least six other civilians throughout Afghanistan: a Charge in Kabul, an MOD advisor in the Afghan Parliament, a diplomat assigned to Security Sector Reform at UNAMA, two medical professionals with Task Force Helmand and a police officer in the EUPOL mission.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: We'd love to see Estonia do more. As one of the first ISAF countries to enter southern Afghanistan and one of the few to operate without caveats, Estonia "gets" the importance of the RC-South civ-mil cell. They "get" the necessity of fielding an OMLTs (as it was recently suggested they do) and they "get" the urgency of training enough ANA (Ref B). What they don't have, unfortunately, is enough Estonian bodies to fulfill all these requirements. We can and will continue to work with them to find ways to do more with less, but we also need to help them manage competing priorities.

Phillips